

I recently had a Fairbury history question posed to me. "What denomination was the old church at 301 E. Walnut which is now a residence.?"

This old church is at the southeast corner of 5th and Walnut Streets in Fairbury.

I thought the easiest way would be to check the 1930 Fairbury Phone book for the church name at 301 E. Walnut. Turns out that in 1930, no church in Fairbury had a telephone that was listed in the city directory !! Fairbury had phones circa 1910, but apparently the churches did not think they needed a telephone in 1930.

Next idea was to do a Google Book search using 301 E. Walnut + fairbury + illinois + church as the search term. I found a 1928 Christian Science Journal that said Fairbury had a church of this domination named the "First Church" at Walnut and 5th Streets in Fairbury. This denomination was founded in 1883 in Boston.

I then searched the Blade archives from the Dominy Memorial Library web site for "First Church" and found a June 17, 1938 Blade article about when services were held for the various Fairbury churches plus any church news. This column noted the Christian Science church had just held their national meeting in Boston. The Blade listed the services at the various Fairbury churches and they called this church the "Christian Church.". The names of all the churches listed were: Methodist, Free Methodist, Cropsey-Fairview Methodist, First Baptist, Presbyterian, Christian, and Fairbury Baptist.

So this church in 1928 was officially the Fairbury First Church of the Christian Science denomination and was commonly called the "Christian" Church in the Blade in 1938.

Interesting in that 2002, Bea Tetley wanted the City of Fairbury to purchase the building and make it into a Community Center. The city council determined the building was not suitable for purchase. In 2003, the building was the "Mrs. Candles Shop." In the 2008 Blade, the house was advertised for sale as a church converted to a residential household.

Per the Livingston County Tax Assessor's web site, this old church was built in 1900.